

Matt. 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Eph. 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace;

- These are distinct but related Biblical concepts.
- Both emphasize readiness and the transformative power of peace.
- The first speaks to being agents of reconciliation.
- The second, part of the Armor of God, means being firmly grounded in the Gospel's message to stand strong and move forward in faith, bringing peace wherever you go.

One of the great pieces of irony in the Word of God is that the Christian prepares for spiritual war by putting on his feet the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

- If we are not filled with the peace of God, we are not prepared for the spiritual battle.

Eph. 6:12 "We wrestle." The verb is a term describing a life to the death, hand-to-hand combat.

- Goal: Get me off my feet in a vulnerable position.
- Truth: Satan and his forces are constantly at work to stop my growth and maturity and to knock me down.

Context: Paul does not seem to be referring to evangelism. Three times he has said:

- 6:11 to stand firm against the schemes of the devil
- 6:13 and having done all, to stand firm
- 6:14 Stand firm therefore
  - ❖ The armor and the commands are not given for us to attack the enemy.
  - ❖ The context is one of being attacked, not attacking.

Eph. 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; [spiritually equipped]

Key Point: The armor is given so we "may be able to resist in the evil day."

The analogy of having our feet shod is so that we can resist and stand firm when we are attacked. We are to stand firm, hold our position and not run away.

In order to do that, our feet need to be both protected and equipped to keep from slipping.

Paul uses the expression of feet being shod with this preparation or readiness.

Why not our hands, arms, or some other body part?

What do we do with our feet that we do not do with any other body part? We walk!

Feet depict the path we walk, the direction of our lives, and the active expression of our faith.

Eph. 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you  
that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called,

Key Point: The right shoes are imperative for effective combat.

- Need to be properly fitted for both marching and fighting.

Shoes of Roman Empire soldiers: caligae Formed the foundation of his armament

- The foot soldiers of the empire relied on walking as their primary means of transportation, so the ability to move easily and comfortably was a necessity for them.
- Specifically designed to keep soldiers' feet healthy during the rigors of long forced marches and were very different from the sandals worn by most of the populace.

Key Point: Soldiers needed to be able to step about in battle without thinking about where they placed their feet. They needed solid footing so they could concentrate on the battle at hand.

- The shoes were constructed from 3 layers of leather, which were pulled up and laced around the ankle.
- Thick leather soles, embedded with hobnails or bits of rock for increased traction, were tied to the feet with numerous leather straps.
- The hobnails would protect the soldier's feet over rough ground, give him firm footing on uneven terrain and enabled him to use them in battle to stomp on fallen enemies.
- Make it easier to hold their ground or navigate through difficult terrain
- If he lost his footing and went down, the enemy had him.
- It was difficult to walk backward.

The enemies of the Roman Empire would place sharp, spiked objects just beneath the surface of the ground and camouflaged with leaves or soft dirt. Any attacking soldier not wearing shoes substantial enough for the attack would find himself crippled or killed.

Our enemy, Satan the devil, will use every opportunity to litter our path with distractions and traps. Only the shoes God gives us as part of His armor can give us the protection we need to keep moving safely across the battlefield.

These shoes have been designed specifically to meet the needs of the Christian, who must daily struggle against Satan and his emissaries. They are an integral part of the believer's armor, "... that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

- Timeless design no more worrying about changing styles
- Providing incomparable balance and sure footing
- Soles of indestructible material standing up to the toughest punishment
- Durability unmatched guaranteed never to wear out
- At a price that CAN'T be beat!

Eph. 6:15a And your feet shod... What is Your Shoe Size? How great is your confidence in God? To Shod, *hupodusameno*, is to bind under one's feet, to be in bonds, to tie, to wind, to knit or be at one with. It also has to do with your walk, or how you walk out your life from day-to-day.

### Shodding or Putting Horseshoes On A Horse

1. Protection: Some horses have soft, weak hooves that can be prone to break or bruise easily. Wearing a set of shoes can keep the hoof from wearing off too fast and unevenly. A set of shoes can eliminate cracks in the hoof that can lead to serious lameness issues.

2. Traction: Horses that pull heavy loads or participate in certain sporting events like jumping or barrel racing need to have good traction.
  - Driving on bald tires > blowouts, decreased efficiency
3. Correction: A horse's foot needs to have the proper form and structure to remain healthy. Often the term "balanced hoof" is used to describe a hoof that is capable of supporting the horse while functioning correctly. What if the hoof is not balanced?
  - Preventative hoof care program to prevent any lameness issues, preferably before they happen.

Key Point: You are not just putting shoes on a horse. The shoes become a part of the horse. These shoes God provides must be a regular part of me if I am to stand firm against the enemy. We often look at characters of the Bible and stand in awe at the courage of these men displayed in fighting their adversaries - physical or spiritual.

- James records that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.
- Paul had been bruised, beaten, imprisoned and riddled with infirmities.
- Jeremiah was depressed and wanted to resign as a spokesman for the Lord.

How do we differ from these men, and why don't our lives and testimonies have the same impact? Why are we often such easy prey for the devil?

Unshod: Many times, we find ourselves in the midst of combat and find that we are unshod. Unthinkable! How often are we spiritually unshod! In such a condition, we will trip and stumble or get trampled upon. Our exposed feet are prone to getting cut. If left unattended, infected.

Truth: Only when we grow in the knowledge of the Word of God will we begin to grasp the breadth and depth of His promises, His peace, His protection, His VICTORY.

Then we shall begin to have that confidence, preparedness and firm foundation to withstand the devil. It is a confidence in the fact that we have been redeemed. That confidence can only be made manifest if we are living the life of the redeemed [I Pet. 1:13-19]. Is my walk worthy?

Slipshod: the Israelites after they had wandered forty years in the wilderness.

Shortly before crossing the Jordan into the promised land, Moses had summoned all the people. He had given testimony of God's deliverance from Egypt and His faithfulness in providing for them while they had wandered.

Deut. 29:5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

The purpose was simple: Why was God having Joshua lead them into their inheritance?

- that God might establish the children of Israel as His people and
- that they would fulfill His purpose as a nation of priests and chosen vessels.

The balance of the Old Testament illustrates how they failed - miserably - in their responsibility. Webster defines the word "slipshod" as "having shoes down at the heel . . . negligent, lax, careless."

The Israelites had seen, tasted, touched and heard God's greatness, His might and His grace, and yet their actions belied this. These people witnessed God's faithfulness and yet did not possess the trust and the confidence. So they were defeated.

Consider: Which am I? Shod - Unshod - Slipshod

We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

We must be shod with something which offers protection and leaves no area exposed.

- The believer must be shod with "the preparation of the Gospel of Peace."

Preparation: Greek hetoimasia = Preparedness or habitual readiness; foundation, firm footing;

Only time used in the NT = significant = context of warfare

- Readiness implies constant vigilance
- Study the enemy's strategy; his tactics
- Establishment of a firm foundation or solid knowledge

Greek Septuagint: Uses the same word, hetoimasia, to convey the meaning of a firm foundation.

Ps. 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;

lovingkindness and truth go before You.

- Just as righteousness and justice underpin the throne of God, so the Gospel message provides the solid footing a believer must have.
- The Gospel of Peace provides us with the preparation or foundation we need to face life's spiritual battles.

"The Gospel itself is to be the firm footing of the believer with his walk being worthy of it and therefore a testimony in regard to it." [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary]

- Preparation is knowing the Prince of Peace and His Word; Be Confident in Him

Peace = Strong's #7965 Hebrew word for peace, shalom (שלום) is derived from a root denoting wholeness or completeness; to be complete, perfect and full

Meaning of the Hebrew letters read right to left:

- Shin 300 Victory of good over evil, Holy Spirit
  - Meaning: teeth, the fire of God to consume all His enemies, devour, destroy
- Lamed 30 Blood of Messiah, Dedication to a task
  - Meaning: staff, goad or stick, to teach or instruct, authority, to urge forward
- Vav 6 Man
  - Meaning: nail or hook, to secure, pin together, connect
- Mem A closed Mem means: Hidden Truth

Shalom Peace: God's victory over evil. He consumes His enemies and releases peace, health, safety, rest, wholeness and the absence of discord.

In that climate of peace, we can receive instruction from God and receive His direction.

Shalom reconnects us with God when our minds are full of fear.

The key to having our feet shod with "the preparation of the gospel of peace" remains in our having daily, growing confidence and trust in God.

Isa. 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusts in Thee.

Context: In Isaiah 24-27, God gave Isaiah the foresight to see the approaching Assyrian armies. He described in graphic detail the destruction that terrible force would bring to the land and people. Isaiah inserts and emphasizes the theme of hope right in the middle of these 4 dreadful chapters. Even during the apocalyptic events that would occur in the northern kingdom, culminating in defeat and annexation in 721 BC, a faithful person could find perfect peace in God.

Key Point: Stayed means my mind is not subject to change; it is firm in belief, determination. Someone has said: "The mind is like Velcro. Whatever you throw at it tends to stick."

Question: What am I daily throwing at my mind?

Consider: We all face various tribulations and fiery trials. You may face a difficult challenge this week. God offers you His perfect peace even though you may be surrounded by hard and difficult circumstances.

Key Point: Peace is not the absence of trouble or conflict. It is the sense of God's presence and assurance of His activity on my behalf in the midst of trouble.

A King offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace.

Pic #1 was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror, for peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds.

➤ All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

Pic #2: A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind, and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. But in that tree, a little bird had built a nest. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

➤ Peace means to be in the midst of a storm and still be calm in your heart.

Walking in peace means Christ's presence is in charge. Peace is a powerful weapon.

The enemy doesn't know what to do with someone who lives in peace and refuses to be hassled. To live victoriously, winning the battle over all the enemy's schemes, you must surrender to the Prince of Peace.

➤ Relationship with Him, meditating on His Word, and learning His ways bring us to peace.

Renner: Defines God's peace as a "conquering force that is so strong and effective, all the chaos formerly experienced by that individual will be replaced with a peace that prevails in every area of his or her life." [Dressed To Kill]

## The Gospel Of Peace Is Our Firm Footing In The Battle Against Satan.

There is deliberate irony, in that the *Gospel of Peace* enables us to wage war successfully.

**I. The Gospel brings peace in the midst of the battle.**

MacClaren: "Now, having got peace in your heart, go out and fight to keep it. For, if we are warring with the devil we are at peace with God; and if we are at peace with the devil, we are warring with God. The two states of peace and war go together.

There is no real peace which has not conflict in it."

II Cor. 6:1-12 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich;  
as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

As in the thick of the fight, and yet kept in perfect peace, because the soul is stayed on God. "All the armies of the world may camp round the fortress, and the hurtling noise of battle may be loud in the plains, but up upon the impregnable cliff crowned by its battlements there is a central citadel, with a chapel in the heart of it; and to the worshippers there none of the noise ever penetrates. The Gospel which laps us in peace and puts it in our hearts makes us soldiers."

## The Gospel of Peace

The Apostle Paul wrote about the Gospel and he also wrote about peace.

Eph. 6:15 is the only place where he joined the Gospel and peace together.

- In Christ, we have peace with God. [Rom. 5:1]
- In Christ, we have the peace of God [Eph. 2:13-14a; Phil. 4:7]

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

What are you facing? Scripture tells us we can stand firm.

Phil. 4:6-7 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

H.B. Charles: Many times in Scripture alongside a command to pray is a promise for what God will do if we call on Him in prayer.

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ What a friend we have in Jesus         | All our sins and griefs to bear       |
| What a privilege to carry                | Everything to God in prayer           |
| ➤ Oh, what <u>peace we often forfeit</u> | Oh, what <u>needless pain we bear</u> |
| All because we do not carry              | Everything to God in prayer           |

Note: The battle may still be raging in your life. God may do nothing to stop the battle around you, BUT He will send peace to guard or garrison your heart and mind.

You can lose your job without losing your joy. You can lose your health without losing your hope.

You can lose a child to an alternative lifestyle without losing your faith. Instead of me trying to keep peace, I can put on the shoes of the Gospel and Peace and let it keep me.

- When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll,
- Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, It is well with my soul.

Matt. 8:22-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25 relates the miracle of Jesus calming the storm at sea as the first of a series of miracles that culminate in Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. [Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20].

Consider: Who Jesus is and what that means to us in the trials of life.

Context: Jesus had been teaching His disciples the Word.

Now it was time for a practical test to see what they had learned.

- The hearing of God's Word is intended to produce faith. [Rom. 10:17]
- Faith must always be tested.

Dwight Moody: Our faith must be tested. God builds no ships but what He sends to sea.

Lesson: Jesus can be trusted in the storms of life.

Key Point #1: Jesus is Lord over the natural [Lord over creation] and the spiritual world.

This was an unexpected storm to the disciples, but not to the Lord Jesus. Even these seasoned fishermen feared for their lives. The sovereign Lord led them directly into it!

➤ Storms hit suddenly without warning. Test and develop your character; it reveals it. Hudson Taylor was talking to a young missionary who was about to start work in China. "Look at this," he said. He pounded his fist on the table. The teacups jumped, and the tea spilled. Taylor said, "When you begin your work, you will be buffeted in numerous ways. The trials will be like blows. Remember, these blows will bring out only what is in you. If you don't spend time with the Lord in the calm of life, you won't know how to trust Him in the storms."

- Storms hit believers. Christians are not exempt from the storms and trials of life.
- Storms hit obedient believers who are serving Christ.

This storm did not hit the disciples because they had been disobedient but, rather, because they had been obedient! Jesus said, "Let's go over to the other side." These men, who had committed their lives to serve Christ, obeyed. He led them straight into a storm!

Note: They should not have been in fear.

Mark 4:35 Jesus saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. [His promise]

Wiersbe: His commandments are always His enablements.

Nothing can hinder the working out of His plans.

He didn't promise an easy trip, but He did promise a guaranteed arrival at their destination.

Note: The Lord checked out and seemed to leave them alone in the storm.

Jesus was sacked out in the back of the boat, oblivious to their dire need!

Key Point #2: In reality, the Lord was with them in the storm.

Sometimes He waits until we are at our wit's end so that we sense how great our need really is. But even before the disciples called on Him, Jesus was there with them in the boat, going through the storm with them. He has promised,

Heb. 13:5 "I will never leave thee, nor will I ever forsake thee."

Rom. 8:38-39 No trial can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Key Point #3: We must trust Jesus in the storms of life.

Mark 4:40 And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

They had heard Him teach the Word and had seen Him perform miracles. Yet they still had no faith. It was their UNBELIEF that caused their fear which made them question His care.

Heb. 3:12 Beware of an evil heart of unbelief.

Key Point #4: Storms often expose: I am not trusting in the Lord.

This storm brought them to the end of themselves. We all must know our weakness so that we will rely on the Lord's strength. Storms often show us things that we don't see in calmer times.

Key Point #5: Storms reveal my distorted views of the trial.

The disciples cried: Master, Master, we are perishing! God's promised Messiah is on board!

In their panic, they had a distorted view of the problem. Their fear was excessive.

If we're so focused on the problem that we cannot see God's control over it, then we're not trusting Him.

Key Point #6: Storms reveal my distorted view of myself. Master, Master, we are perishing.

➤ Self-pity is a sure sign of being focused on myself.

Key Point #7: Storms reveal my distorted view of my Lord Jesus

Mark 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another,

What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

They underestimated His power.

❖ We try to solve our problem by figuring everything into the equation EXCEPT the supernatural power of Christ.

❖ We must, by faith, affirm 2 things in our stormy trials: His sovereignty & His care

I Pet. 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: <sup>7</sup> Casting all your care upon him; for He cares for you.

Trusting in God has sustained the saints in many horrible trials down through the centuries.

You must learn to trust Him. We are commanded to walk by faith and to be built up in faith.

Col. 2:6-7 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

<sup>7</sup> Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Consider: Man's chief end is to glorify God no matter the storm.

➤ The fiercer the storm, the more the Lord is glorified when I trust Him.

➤ The more I trust Him in this storm, the more I will know Him and trust Him in the next.

Note: The disciples first feared the storm. This fear stemmed from their lack of faith.

Then, they feared the Lord. Stemmed from their new awareness of His awesome power.

Truth: Sometimes Jesus doesn't calm the storm. Sometimes the boat does sink, even if we're trusting in Jesus. John the Baptist wasn't delivered from prison; he lost his head. James and the apostle Paul were put to death. So what should we do if we trust in the Lord, but the boat sinks? The miracle doesn't come.

- "We trust in the Lord Jesus as we go under. We go down singing the doxology."

John Hus was burned at the stake for his faith, but he went out singing. On July 6, 1415, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, it is for thee that I patiently endure this cruel death. I pray thee to have mercy on my enemies." He was heard reciting the Psalms as the flames engulfed him.

Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer were burned at the stake together. As the fires were lit, Latimer cried out, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out!"

Hudson Taylor lost his beloved wife Maria as they both sought to take the gospel to inland China. But he stood at her grave and sang, "Jesus, I am resting, resting, in the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart

My husband and I were in Atlanta visiting our friends. One afternoon, a friend of our 23-year-old daughter called. She didn't want to alarm us, but she and some others had been trying all day to get in touch with our daughter and couldn't reach her. It was around 3:30 pm. Our hearts raced. We called family and friends. Had anyone talked with her? No. My husband's phone rang. The caller ID showed an unfamiliar number. He answered his phone, and our world stopped. A coroner was on the line. Our daughter had been involved in an accident earlier that morning. She'd died instantly.

To say that nothing could have prepared us for that moment would be wrong. God had prepared us, but we felt numb and overwhelmed in disbelief. It felt like Jesus was asleep in our boat. He had to be. Because if Jesus were awake, surely this tragedy would not have happened. After we reached our friends' house, my husband went inside and delivered the news. My friend rushed out to the car where I sat, too paralyzed to move. When I was able to move from the car to the front steps, I looked up to see my husband holding his Bible and quoting verses. As my emotions swirled, I heard him say, "Now we have to live what we said we believe."

*What do I believe?*

I believe Jesus Christ was born, crucified, and rose from the dead so that if I chose to confess my sins and believe in Him, I can spend eternity in Heaven.

*What do I know?*

I know I have a personal relationship with Jesus.

I also know my daughter had a personal relationship with Jesus.

So I know I'm only *temporarily* separated from my precious daughter.

We will spend eternity with Jesus together.

The great news of the Gospel held and comforted me when the tragic news of my daughter's death crushed me. It still does.

Jesus didn't abandon us in our darkest hour. He was still in the boat, wide awake.

His own death and resurrection gave us the power we needed to make it through that crushing hour and every hour since.

*Many others have also experienced the heart-breaking, tragic loss of a child or loved one.*

*But not as many have been able to sing "It is well with my soul."*

*We don't scrape our way to the surface of acceptance and force ourselves to speak words of positive affirmations.*

*We stand firm on our firm beliefs.*

*Our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.*

Just as shoes allow us to walk on otherwise painful terrain without fear, so the preparation of the gospel of peace allows us to traverse the otherwise painful trials and tribulations of life without fear, knowing that what awaits is greater than anything we could possibly suffer in this world" [II Cor. 4:16-18]

Rom. 8:18 For I reckon [counting or banking on] that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.